

I. THE PROBLEM

Although the Industrial Register maintains a vast amount of detailed information on individual foreign industrial plants, carefully documented as to source, date and reliability of each item of information; and although its IBM machine system offers a rapid means of indexing the available information in many different ways; yet there is not today any means by which the Register may rapidly supply to requesters extensive transcripts of detailed information on the plants, for example, of a given industry or of a given industrial region. A remedy for this situation is needed, as requests coming into the Register from the several agencies indicate that analytical needs for industrial information now tend to emphasize details (such as floorspace, output, number of employees etc.) of particular installations rather than overall indices and guides.

II. PROPOSED SOLUTION

It is proposed that the Industrial Register commence to prepare and maintain its compilations of data applicable to individual industrial plants on multilith Master Sheets, which will be susceptible to rapid reproduction upon demand from IAC agencies. The process may best be described by example:

A request is received for all data on the Soviet Steel Plant at Magnitogorsk. The Register combs through its dossier on this plant, organizes the scraps of information into one summary bearing full documentation as to the sources used, eliminates contradictions when this can be done with certainty, includes contradictory statements when the correct solution is not certain, and types the whole summary on a multilith Master Sheet. The Master Sheet is then reproduced, copies are sent to the requester and to other agencies known to be interested, copies are kept by the Register to be used as work sheets, and the Master Sheet is filed. New items of incoming information concerning this plant are typed directly on to the Master Sheet. When another request is received concerning this same plant, the Register is able to service it by running the Master Sheet through the multilith machine.

By means of this system the Register should be able, over a period of time, to crystallize its documentary holdings into summary compilations which can be made rapidly available to authorized requesters. (Note that these compilations will not be "evaluations" in the commonly accepted sense: They will consist of documented and itemized information with all limitations as to source, date and reliability clearly indicated. The analyst who works with them, to prepare his own evaluation, will not have to ask himself, "Who made these estimates?"

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When did he do so? On what basis did he arrive at these figures?").

3. It is believed that the solution proposed above would provide a substantially sound basis for the estimates and evaluations of foreign industry which the IAC intelligence agencies will be preparing recurrently, for various purposes, for many years to come.

Annex

19 May 1949
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MEMORANDUM FOR: STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE IAC

Subject: Industrial Register Cards (ICF)

Reference: (a) Memo for Standing Committee Members of the
IAC, subject as above, dated 15 April 1949

1. All Standing Committee Members except Army and Air Force concurred in the proposal contained in the referenced memorandum. It is believed that the major objection of Army and Air Force to the proposal is based on the size of the backlog which has developed in the Industrial Register - in the neighborhood of 46,000 items.

2. Action is being taken in OCD of CIA to eliminate that backlog as soon as possible. The backlog is construed as that material being received, or which has been received, by Industrial Register in format which is not substantially identical with the Industrial Card File. Material received from U. S. Forces Austria, European Command Intelligence Center, etc., on 8 x 13 sheets of paper but susceptible to cutting and filing with 8 x 5 material, is not considered part of the immediate backlog. Backlog materials now to be disseminated may be reproduced by mimeograph, multilith or by ditto, provided that the format of reproduction is such as to permit the product to be filed easily and systematically with other ICF materials.

3. In consequence, the proposal contained in referenced memorandum will be postponed at least until the IR backlog is eliminated. Once the backlog is eliminated the feasibility of making dissemination of compiled information on a request basis may be reconsidered.

4. As a result of the above, the necessity for further inter-departmental coordination in this matter has ceased and the item will be dropped from present Standing Committee consideration.

PRESCOTT CHILDS
Chief, ICAPS, CIA

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